

GS-1896-5/7, Border Patrol Agent – *Fact Sheet*

NOW RECRUITING!

Are you interested in a job with wide-open spaces and opportunities to match?

As a Border Patrol Agent, your primary focus would be to work in tandem with your U.S. Customs and Border Protection partners to prevent terrorists and terrorist weapons from entering the United States. Border Patrol Agents also detect and prevent the smuggling and unlawful entry of undocumented aliens into the United States, and apprehend those people found to be in violation of the immigration laws. Also, due to the increase in drug smuggling operations, the Border Patrol is the primary drug-interdicting agency along the land border between the ports of entry.

One of the most important duties performed by a Border Patrol Agent is known as “line-watch”. This involves the detection and apprehension of undocumented aliens and their smugglers by maintaining surveillance from a covert position, pursuing leads, responding to electronic sensor alarms, utilizing infrared scopes during night operations, using low-light level television systems, sighting aircraft, and interpreting and following tracks, marks, and other physical evidence. In addition, Border Patrol Agents perform traffic checks, traffic observation, city patrol transportation checks, and other administrative, intelligence, and anti-smuggling activities.

Start your career as a **Border Patrol Agent** working on the U.S. southwest border — Arizona, California, New Mexico, South Texas, and West Texas.

- We are looking for physically fit men and women who want the ever-changing missions we offer and have the intelligence and courage to handle the responsibility. You will be a part of an organization with intense loyalty and *esprit de corps*.
- New hires must successfully complete approximately five months of paid training at the CBP Border Patrol Academy in Artesia, NM, on topics such as immigration and nationality laws, Spanish, physical training, and marksmanship. Border Patrol Agents must be willing to work overtime and shift work under arduous conditions, and be proficient in the use of and carry firearms. Border Patrol Agents are subject to random drug testing. They may also be sent on temporary assignments on short notice and on permanent reassignments to any duty location.

Benefits and Salary...

Border Patrol Agents enjoy a generous benefits package including personal leave days for vacation, illness, and family care, a wide choice of health insurance programs, life insurance, long-term care insurance, flexible spending accounts for out-of-pocket medical or dependent care expenses, a fully portable retirement program that includes a Thrift Savings Plan (similar to a 401k), and a uniform allowance.

They are eligible for law enforcement retirement at age 50 or older with 20 years of service or after 25 years of service at any age.

These are full-time permanent positions being filled in the excepted service. Initial appointments are made at the GS-5 (\$35,595) and GS-7 (\$40,519) grade levels with non-competitive promotion potential to GS-11 (\$52,912). Border Patrol Agents can earn up to an additional 25 percent of basic salary each year in overtime pay. Salaries are based on the General Schedule for 2006.

Accelerated Promotion Plan – Entry level is either at grade GS-5 or GS-7, depending upon qualifications. The Border Patrol Agent position has an accelerated promotion plan, which means that upon successful completion of the 6 ½ month probationary examination, individuals hired at the GS-5 level are eligible for promotion to the GS-7, and individuals hired at the GS-7 level are eligible for promotion to the GS-9.

Pre-employment Requirements consist of a thorough background investigation, medical examination, fitness test, and drug test. If your background includes past or present arrests, convictions, dismissals from previous jobs, debts and financial issues, excessive use of alcohol, use of illegal drugs, and/or the sale and distribution of illegal drugs, you most probably will be rated unsuitable for this position. You may also be subject to a polygraph examination.

Job Requirements. Border Patrol Agents must wear a uniform, carry a weapon, work overtime and shift work (sometimes under arduous conditions), and be subject to random drug testing.

Qualifications. If you are interested in applying and want to receive notification of an open vacancy announcement, go to www.USAJOBS.opm.gov, click on folder entitled MY USAJOBS, then click on Create Your Account Now. Follow the instructions pertaining to receipt of e-mails, and register for the GS-1896, Border Patrol Agent. More specifics on qualifying experience and education will be found in the vacancy announcement. However, here are the basic qualifications.

- **Must be a U.S. citizen.** U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) also has a residency requirement that applies to all applicants other than current CBP employees. If you are not a current CBP employee, CBP requires that for the three (3) years prior to filing an application for employment, individuals must meet one or more of the following primary residence criteria:
 1. Applicant resided in the United States or its protectorates or territories (short trips abroad, such as vacations, will not necessarily disqualify an applicant); or
 2. Applicant worked for the U.S. government as an employee overseas in a federal or military capacity; or
 3. Applicant was a dependent of a U.S. federal or military employee serving overseas.
- **Must possess a valid state driver's license at the time of appointment.**
- **Must be under age 40 to apply.** This position is covered under law enforcement retirement provisions. Therefore, candidates must be referred for selection prior to their 40th birthday unless they presently serve or have previously served in a position covered by federal civilian law enforcement retirement.
- **To qualify for a GS-5 level position, you must have**
 1. Substantial work experience which demonstrates an ability to (1) take charge, make sound decisions, and maintain composure in stressful situations; (2) learn law enforcement regulations, methods, and techniques through classroom training and/or on-the-job instruction; and (3) gather factual information through questioning, observing, and examining documents and records. Examples of qualifying experience include interviewing in a public/private service agency, working as a claims adjuster, journalist, building guard, jail guard, or certain customer relations positions, **or**
 2. Earned a bachelor's or higher degree, **or**
 3. A combination of education and experience.
- **To qualify for a GS-7 level position,** you must meet the basic entry qualification requirements for the GS-5 plus have superior academic achievement, or one year of graduate level education, or one full year of specialized experience equivalent to the GS-5 level, or a combination of education and experience. Specialized experience is law enforcement experience which has demonstrated the ability to (1) make arrests and exercise sound judgment in the use of firearms; (2) deal courteously, tactfully, and effectively on law enforcement matters with individuals or groups; (3) rapidly analyze information and take appropriate action in accordance with applicable laws, court decisions, and law enforcement procedures; and (4) develop and maintain contact with the network of informants.

Appointments will be made under the Federal Career Intern Program (FCIP) and will be in the excepted service. FCIP appointments are designed with a two-year trial period, during which time you will be learning the job and the organization, attending formal training programs, and developing your skills. If your performance and conduct are satisfactory, your appointment will be made permanent at the end of the two-year trial period.

Medical Requirements ... The position requires moderate to arduous physical exertion involving running distances, climbing, jumping, walking, and standing, and exposure to inclement weather. Also requires the use of firearms.

Vision. Uncorrected distant vision must be equal to or better than 20/100 in each eye. Binocular distant vision must be correctable to 20/20 with glasses or contacts. Depth perception must be equal to or better than 70 seconds of arc. Peripheral and color vision must be normal. Monocular vision is generally disqualifying. Refractive surgery to correct vision defects is permissible if an examination by a board-certified ophthalmologist or state licensed and certified optometrist determines there are no post-operative complications.

Hearing/speech. As measured by an audiometer, hearing loss must not exceed 30 decibels in either ear in the 500, 1000, and 2,000 Hz ranges. At 3,000 Hz, the deficit should not exceed 40 decibels in either ear. The use of any hearing aid to comply with the medical standards is unacceptable.

Any condition that would hinder full, efficient performance of duties or would cause a hazard to self or others, or the presence of medical conditions aggravated by environmental conditions, may be disqualifying.

Steps in the Hiring Process, once the positions are announced:

1

Apply by Internet. You must register for the written test for the Border Patrol Agent position during the open application period via the Internet. **Based on your responses to the questions**, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will determine if you meet the basic qualifications for the position. **If you meet the minimum qualifications**, you will identify the city and state in which you want to take the written test. OPM will notify you of the date and time. **After you apply, the remaining steps take about 6-8 months.**

2

Written Test. If you successfully complete **Step 1**, scheduling of the written test will be done during the on-line registration process. As soon as you have registered and been scheduled for the written test, you will be able to print your test admission notice, which will contain the date, location, and time for the written test. This admission notice will also include the contact information for OPM. If you are unable to print your test admission notice, you will need to annotate the OPM contact information while in the registration process, and then request that a copy of your test admission notice be mailed to you. **You are required to bring the test notice with you to the written test.**

If you are unable to attend your scheduled test date and you are unable to reschedule your test date with OPM, you will need to reregister during the next Border Patrol Agent open application period.

We believe that proper test preparation is essential for success, and suggest that you take time to carefully read the study guide. You may download the guide from our web site at www.cbp.gov (**scroll down to click on "Border Patrol", then click on "Careers with Border Patrol", finally, click on "Border Patrol Entrance Examination"**). The test takes about 4.5 hours and contains three sections: (1) logical reasoning skills, (2) Spanish language proficiency, or if you do not speak Spanish, an artificial language test that predicts your ability to learn Spanish, and (3) an assessment of job-related experiences and achievements. Sample questions for the written test can be found in Part III of an open vacancy announcement. Once you have taken the Border Patrol Agent test, you should receive a Notice of Results in the mail within four weeks following the test.

Please Note: If you have already received a tentative selection letter, you do not need to reapply. However, if you have applied and taken the test, but have not already received a tentative selection letter, you must reapply and take the test.

3

Selection Process. If you pass the written test, your name will be placed on an applicant inventory. The nationwide inventory is maintained in score order, and where applicable, veterans preference points are added. Referral for a position is dependent on the scores of the applicants that are available on the inventory when a list is issued. If you are selected, you will be sent a tentative selection package. That package will contain forms and information regarding the oral structured interview, medical, vision, and fitness examinations, drug test, background investigation, and possible polygraph examination—all of which must be satisfactorily completed before a firm offer of employment can be made.

4

Structured Oral Interview. Those applicants who receive a tentative selection letter will be scheduled for a structured oral interview with a panel of Border Patrol Agents. The interview consists of questions regarding the essential functions of the position and situational questions that do not require technical knowledge. The structured interview is a pass/fail interview. Candidates must receive a "pass" in all areas in order to continue in the hiring process.

5

Pre-employment Process. In addition to completing **Step 4**, you must also successfully complete a drug test, physical fitness test, medical examination, background investigation and possible polygraph examination. These will be scheduled and completed as soon as possible.

START
WORK

Final selection and reporting date! If you successfully complete these steps, your name will be placed in the pipeline for future vacancies. As vacancies occur, applicants in the pipeline will be given firm offers of employment. If you decline a job offer, your name may be removed from consideration for any location.

GS-1896-Border Patrol Agent-5/7 – *Fact Sheet*

Physical Fitness Screening Addendum

Due to the strenuous nature of Border Patrol Agent duties and the associated training programs, fitness tests have been developed and will be used to screen candidates for entry-level Border Patrol Agent positions. Although fitness tests are a separate pre-employment requirement, they are administered at the same time and location as the medical examination. The fitness tests include a: (1) push-up test, (2) sit up test, and (3) 5-minute cardiovascular endurance step test.

The pre-employment tests are as follows:

1. **Push-up Test** is a timed test which requires you to complete twenty (20) proper form push-ups in sixty (60) seconds. The depth of the push-up will be measured using a foam block. If needed, rests between pushups must be taken in the “up position.” The Test Administrator will evaluate your form during the test and will instruct you when to start and stop.
2. **Sit-up Test** is a timed test, requiring you to complete twenty-five (25) proper form sit-ups in sixty (60) seconds. The Test Administrator will hold your feet during this test and instruct you when to start and stop.
3. **Step Test** is a timed test, requiring you to step up and down on a twelve-inch high step at a rate of thirty (30) steps per minute for a total time of five (5) minutes duration. To maintain the cadence, an audiotape is used which maintains a constant beat and gives verbal cues. The audiotape also contains special instructions to switch your lead leg every minute to avoid local muscle fatigue.

In order to graduate from the required training at the CBP Border Patrol Academy in Artesia, NM, all trainees must pass a fitness test which includes running 1.5 miles in 13 minutes or less, running a 220-yard dash in 46 seconds or less, and completing the Confidence Course in 2 minutes and 30 seconds or less.

**For more information on the fitness tests
and how to prepare for them,
visit www.cbp.gov, click on careers,
then click on Border Patrol Agent.**